



Department of Justice

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Middle District of Alabama

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Employee of Tuskegee Attorney Sentenced to 33 Months in Federal Prison for Embezzling Funds From Veterans' Accounts

Montgomery, Alabama - Joy Farmer, 41, of Columbus, Georgia, was sentenced on September 7, 2011, by United States District Judge Mark E. Fuller to 33 months in federal prison for bank fraud arising out of her embezzlement of money from veterans' bank accounts, United States Attorney George L. Beck, Jr., announced today.

Farmer—who was indicted on March 23, 2011, and pled guilty on June 1, 2011—was employed as an administrative assistant for an attorney in Tuskegee, Alabama (“the Attorney”). The Attorney had been appointed as a fiduciary for several individuals receiving veterans benefits pursuant to the Fiduciary Program of the United States Department of Veterans Affairs (“VA”), which oversees benefits paid to beneficiaries who are incapable of handling their funds—either because they are minors or because of injury, disease, or old age. For each beneficiary, the Attorney established a bank account to receive VA benefits and pay appropriate expenses (the “Beneficiary Accounts”).

Farmer embezzled approximately \$626,101.67 from 25 different Beneficiary Accounts by writing 327 checks to herself from the Beneficiary Accounts, forging the Attorney’s signature on the checks, depositing the checks in her own bank account, and using the funds to pay personal expenses. To conceal her conduct, Farmer would (a) deposit checks drawn on one Beneficiary Account into a different Beneficiary Account, and (b) deposit funds intended for one beneficiary

to be deposited into the Beneficiary Account of a different beneficiary.

U.S. Attorney George L. Beck, Jr., stated, “This office is committed to protecting those who fought for and protected our country. We will continue to bring to justice those who attempt to take advantage of and victimize this Nation’s veterans.”

Farmer remains released on a \$25,000 unsecured bond. Judge Fuller ordered her to report to prison on November 1, 2011.

The case was investigated by the VA’s Office of Inspector General. The case was prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorneys Andrew O. Schiff and Gray M. Borden.